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# NEW! EXCALIBUR



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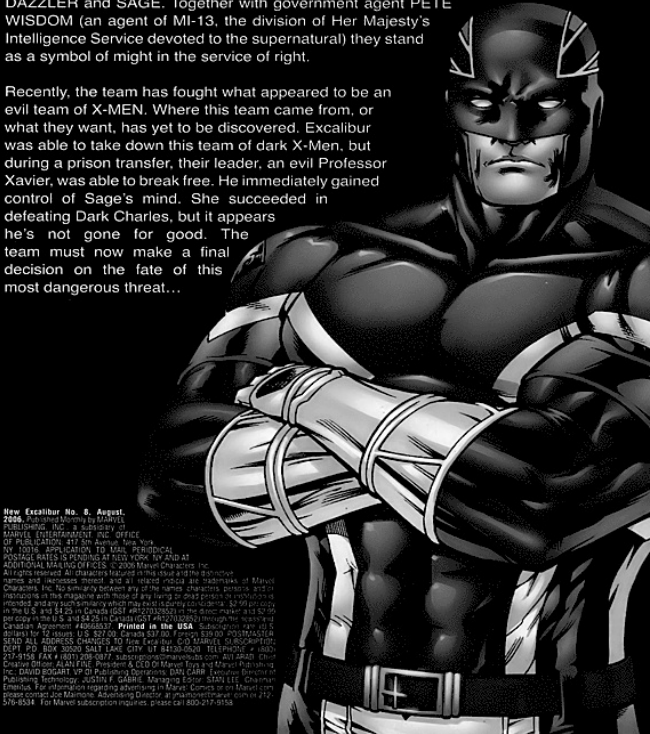
# Previously in NEW EXCALIBUR:

In the aftermath of M-DAY, five disparate heroes are brought together in London: CAPTAIN BRITAIN, JUGGERNAUT, NOCTURNE, DAZZLER and SAGE. Together with government agent PETE WISDOM (an agent of MI-13, the division of Her Majesty's Intelligence Service devoted to the supernatural) they stand as a symbol of might in the service of right.

Recently, the team has fought what appeared to be an evil team of X-MEN. Where this team came from, or what they want, has yet to be discovered. Excalibur was able to take down this team of dark X-Men, but during a prison transfer, their leader, an evil Professor Xavier, was able to break free. He immediately gained control of Sage's mind. She succeeded in defeating Dark Charles, but it appears he's not gone for good. The team must now make a final decision on the fate of this most dangerous threat...

New Excalibur No. 5, August,

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THE LONDON UNDERGROUND

SOME PEOPLE MAY GLANCE, TAKE A SECOND LOOK, OR EVEN LINGER ON HER A BIT TOO LONG.

NO REASON TO WORRY, THOUGH.

CAMDEN MARKET

IT'S A STRANGE WORLD... MAYBE SHE HAS A SKIN DISORDER. MAYBE IT'S SOME NEW PUNK FAD.

MAYBE SHE'S A PERFORMER IN 'CAIS.

ST. JAMES PARK

BECAUSE ASIDE FROM HER APPEARANCE, TALIA JOSEPHINE WAGNER GIVES EVERY INDICATION OF BEING A NORMAL KID OFF ON A LARK.

THE LONDON EYE

TJ DOESN'T NOTICE IF THEY STARE, AND SHE WOULDN'T CARE ANYWAY.

HARROD'S

SHE'S FINALLY FOUND A HOME, A PLACE TO STAY PUT IN FOR ONCE IN A LONG TIME.

IT'S HAVING THE TIME OF HER LIFE.

# BRAIN STORM



By CHRIS  
CLAREMONT &  
MICHAEL  
RYAN

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dialogue and  
additional plotting  
RICK KETCHUM  
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editor in chief  
DAN BUCKLEY  
publisher

THE BAND IS  
FIRST-CLASS.



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG  
TIME, THE VENUE DOESN'T REEK  
OF SMOKE AND CHEAP BEER.



AND THE CROWD  
HAS FALLEN IN  
LOVE WITH HER.

THE ONES THAT  
AREN'T IN LOVE  
WITH THEMSELVES,  
ANYWAY.



SOMETHING SPECIAL IS  
HAPPENING HERE. IT  
DOESN'T GO UNNOTICED.



NOT BY FRIENDS.



NOT BY THOSE  
WHO SECRETLY  
WOULD BE MORE.

ALISON  
BLAIRE IS  
A STAR.



AND THE  
NIGHT  
HAS ONLY  
STARTED.

WAY  
TO GO,  
ALI.

TAKE A  
LOOK, MATE.  
THE BIRD IN THE  
SKIRT'S GIVING YOU  
THE EYE. GIVING  
YOU THE BRUSH  
UP, SHE IS.

YEH?  
MUST BE  
MY LUCKY  
NIGHT.

NOW  
THAT'S  
A VISION.  
NOT TOO  
YOUNG, IS  
SHE?

IS  
THERE  
SUCH A  
THING?  
HOLD ON  
ERE, IS SHE  
BLUE?

DON'T  
WORRY.  
I'LL CHEER  
HER UP.

THAT'S  
NOT--LOOK  
AT HER  
HANDS, HER  
SKIN...

SHE'S  
A BLEEDIN'  
MUTIE!

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET PAST IT. WHAT JAMIE DID...WHAT HAPPENED...IT'S TOO MUCH, BRIAN.

WHO AM I? IF I TRULY AM AS HE MADE ME, AND HE TRULY WAS A MONSTER...

YOU LIKE TO WIN, BETSY, SAME AS JAMIE. YOU DID WHAT YOU HAD TO DO.

ONLY YOU'VE LOST SIGHT OF WHAT'S GOOD AND TRUE, IN YOURSELF AND IN THE WORLD.

AND, OF COURSE, YOU'RE NOT INSANE.

HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?

WE'RE TWINS. REMEMBER? THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU JUST KNOW, LIKE WHEN YOU'RE IN TROUBLE.

ARE YOU IN TROUBLE, BRIAN?

BEG PARDON?

AH, THAT. I'VE BEEN GIVING IT A LOT OF THOUGHT. I USED TO BE GOOD AT THAT, YOU KNOW... THINKING.

YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, LIONHEART...AND THIS ALBION CHARACTER, WHAT'S THAT ALL ABOUT?

ALL DEEMED WORTHY OF BECOMING CAPTAIN BRITAIN FACE THE CHALLENGE OF THE SWORD AND THE AMULET.

THE CHOICE OF MIGHT OR REASON, I REMEMBER.

ALL THE CAPTAINS I KNOW OF, THOSE SWORN TO ROMA, THEY CHOSE THE AMULET.

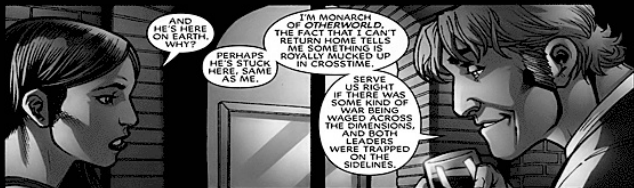




KELSEY LEIGH  
CHOSE THE  
SWORD AND  
BECAME  
LIONHEART, BUT  
WHAT MADE US  
THINK SHE'S THE  
ONLY ONE?

SUPPOSE...  
THERE'S  
ANOTHER  
CORPS OF CAPTAINS,  
THOSE WHO  
CHOSE MIGHT  
OVER  
REASON?

FROM THE  
WAY HE  
PRESENTED  
HIMSELF,  
ALBION IS A  
NATURAL  
LEADER, AND  
HE SEEMED  
TO CONSIDER  
ME HIS  
PERSONAL  
RIVAL.



AND  
HE'S HERE  
ON EARTH.  
WHY?

PERHAPS  
HE'S STUCK  
HERE, SAME  
AS ME.

I'M MONARCH  
OF OTHERWORLD,  
THE FACT THAT I CAN'T  
RETURN HOME TELLS  
ME SOMETHING IS  
ROYALLY MUCKED UP  
IN CROSSTIME.

SERVE  
US RIGHT  
IF THERE WAS  
SOME KIND OF  
WAR BEING  
WAGED ACROSS  
THE DIMENSIONS,  
AND BOTH  
LEADERS  
WERE TRAPPED  
ON THE  
SIDELINES.



WELL, I  
FEEL BETTER  
ALREADY.

WHAT DO  
YOU PLAN  
TO DO?

I'M  
CHAMPION OF  
THE FORCES OF  
REASON.

I SUPPOSE  
I'LL JUST HAVE  
TO THUMP HIS  
HEAD UNTIL I  
WIN.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, MISS BLAIRE?

I'M SORRY? LOOK, THE SET'S OVER...

YES!!!

ahem. SORRY.

NO, NO... I MEAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? YOU SHOULD BE SELLING OUT MAJOR VENUES. YOU SHOULD BE AT THE TOP OF THE CHARTS.

MY NAME IS GARETH EDWARDS. I'M A&R FOR VESTAL MUSIC.

I LIKE WHAT I HEAR. I WANT YOU TO MAKE A DEMO WITH ME.

YOU KNOW I'M A MUTANT, RIGHT?

OF COURSE. BUT THE WAY YOU LOOK, THE WAY YOU SING? TRUST ME, NO ONE WILL CARE.

THANK YOU, GARETH. BUT I DON'T DO ALBUMS OR AUDITORIUMS ANYMORE. RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW, THIS IS MORE THAN GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO YOU... THE HURT GOES THAT DEEP, DOES IT?

IF YOU EVER CHANGE YOUR MIND, CALL ME.

AND ALISON? LET ME KNOW WHENEVER YOU'VE GOT A GIG. THAT'S NOT BUSINESS... I LIKE YOUR VOICE.

I'D LIKE TO HEAR MORE OF IT.

TELL US THE TRUTH, LUV...

HEY!

YOU HEARD ME SING, DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO ASK?

I'VE HAD THE FAME, THE MONEY. EVEN THE MOVIE. ALL THAT MATTERS NOW IS THE MUSIC.

ARE YOU ALL-NATURAL, OR DID YOU MAKE YOURSELF UP JUST FOR US?







I'M SORRY, BUT COULD THIS BE ANY CREEPIER? WHERE IS EVERYONE?

THE FACILITY WAS EVACUATED ON MY ORDER WHEN THE INCIDENT OCCURRED. EVERY SINGLE MIND WITHIN A TWO-MILE RADIUS IS AT RISK.

SO WE'RE GOING IN. GREAT.

THAT'S WHAT WE DO.

THERE IS NO BRAIN ACTIVITY WITHIN HIS BODY. HE'S BEING KEPT ALIVE BY MACHINES.

BUT SEVEN HOURS AGO, A GUARD KILLED THE MEDICAL TEAM OVERSEEING HIM.

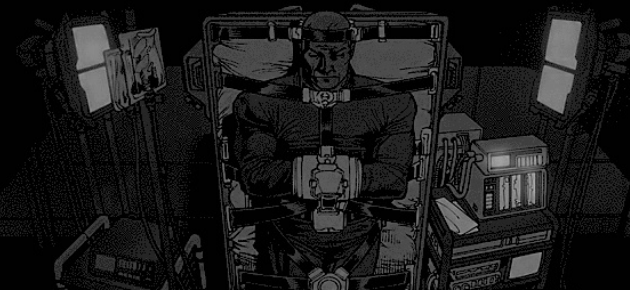
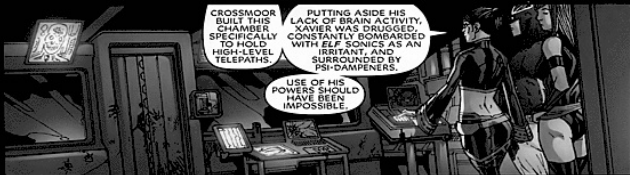
AFTERWARDS, THE GUARD SAID ONE WORD.

"PSYLOCKE."

AND THEN HE SHOT HIMSELF IN THE HEAD.

YOU OKAY, ALI?

NEVER BETTER. THIS IS GOING TO BE FUN, HUM?





BUT WE HAVE TO FIND OUT. AND IT WOULD SEEM PSYLOCKE IS PART OF IT ALL.

BRILLIANT.

WITH YOUR NEWFOUND "IMMUNITY" TO TELEPATHY, YOU'RE IN A PERFECT POSITION TO CONFRONT HIM.



I CAN MONITOR PSYLOCKE AND XAVIER FROM HERE, AND IF NEED BE... WE SEND IN JUGGERNAUT TO END THINGS.

I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF USING BETSY AS--

BAIT. I'LL DO IT.

BETSY...

DON'T WORRY, BRIAN. BESIDES... A BIT OF FUN WILL KEEP MY MIND OFF MY OWN PROBLEMS.



CAIN... CAN I TALK TO YOU? OUTSIDE?

UH... SURE. YEAH, OF COURSE.





SHOO!



I JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR THE  
LAST FEW WEEKS... I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN  
WATCHING OUT FOR ME.

PW-1

OH...UH,  
WELL, IT'S NO  
PROBLEM...

CAIN...  
YOU  
SAVED MY  
LIFE.



COME OUT,  
COME OUT,  
WHEREVER YOU  
ARE...



I JUST FELT SO  
ALONE...UNTIL YOU CAME  
BACK INTO MY LIFE.

YOU  
MAKE  
ME FEEL  
SAFE.

WAIT...WHAT  
ARE YOU...?



CHK!

CAIN...  
PLEASE...

Al...



WELCOME,  
PSYLOCKE. I'VE  
MISSED YOU.

FOR SO LONG  
I WAS TRAPPED IN  
YOUR MIND. FOR SO  
LONG I WAS KEPT FROM  
THE ASTRAL PLANE.  
MY REALM...

THE  
REALM OF THE  
**SHADOW  
KING.**









YOU  
CAN'T  
ENTER MY  
MIND...

FOOLISH  
PET... YOUR  
MIND WAS INDEED  
CLOSED TO ME, BUT  
I KNOW YOU TOO  
WELL.



INSIDE  
AND OUT, UP AND  
DOWN, I WAS PART  
OF YOU.

AND OF  
COURSE... I  
WAS WITH YOU  
WHEN YOU  
DIED.

NO... THAT'S  
NOT POSSIBLE... *THIS*  
CHARLES XAVIER IS FROM  
AN ALTERNATE REALITY!  
HOW COULD YOU  
POSSIBLY BE--?

WHEN  
VARGAS' SWORD SLID  
THROUGH  
YOU, IT WAS  
ECSTASY. IT  
WAS  
FREEDOM!

BUT SURPRISINGLY  
YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS  
DID NOT DISPERSE... IT WAS  
PULLED BY THE STRINGS OF  
REALITY ITSELF.

AND WHILE  
I ESCAPED, I  
FOUND MYSELF  
IN ANOTHER  
UNIVERSE.



THERE I  
FOUND CHARLES  
XAVIER ONCE  
MORE... AND THERE  
I SHATTERED HIS  
MIND.



THERE I  
MADE HIS  
CHILDREN MY  
HOUNDS.

BECAUSE  
IN ALL THE  
REALITIES...  
THERE IS  
ONLY ONE  
SHADOW  
KING.



BUT I NEVER FORGOT YOU.

YOU WHO IMPRISONED ME.

AND BY A COSMIC WHIM, I WAS SHOWN THE WAY BACK TO YOU.



NO MORE MUTANTS.



REALITY SHIFTED, AND CRACKS FORMED ACROSS ALL THE REALITIES. MY PETS AND I WERE ABLE TO SLIP BACK INTO THIS REALITY.



THIS REALITY THAT HAS CAUSED ME SO MUCH TROUBLE. YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT WAITS...WHAT PAWNS ARE IN MOTION...

BUT NO, I NEVER FORGOT ABOUT YOU. WHAT SHALL WE DO FIRST, I WONDER?



AH, YES, MAKE YOU WATCH YOUR BROTHER DIE.

# CRASH!

BRIAN!

EVERYONE  
YOU'VE EVER  
LOVED, WE'LL  
FIND TOGETHER.  
AND THEN YOU'LL  
WATCH AS  
THEY'RE TORN  
APART BEFORE  
YOUR VERY  
EYES.

BETSY...  
GET  
OUT...

AND MIND-  
BLIND AS YOU  
ARE, THERE'S  
NOTHING YOU  
CAN DO  
ABOUT IT.

IS THAT  
RIGHT?

IF YOU REALLY  
COULD HURT ME,  
TAKE ME OVER  
AND INFECT MY  
MIND...

...YOU  
WOULD  
HAVE DONE  
SO  
ALREADY.

LT!

DO YOU FEEL THAT, YOU  
FOUL, EVIL CREATURE? THAT'S A  
TELEKINETIC BUBBLE THAT JUST FORMED  
IN THE CENTER OF YOUR BRAIN.

COLD,  
ISN'T  
IT?

HKK--!!

AND  
THAT?  
THAT WAS  
YOUR HOST  
BODY  
EXPERIENCING  
A MASSIVE  
STROKE.

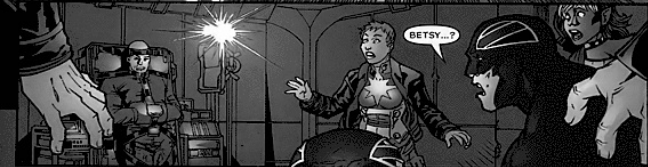
DO YOU FEEL  
SECTIONS OF  
YOUR BRAIN BEING  
CRUSHED, YOU  
ABHORRENT, VILE  
MONSTER? YOUR  
MIND BEING  
REWIRED?

YOU  
WON'T  
CONTROL  
THESE  
PEOPLE  
AGAIN.

NOW,  
PLEASE...

...TELL  
ME AGAIN  
HOW  
HELPLESS  
I AM.





# SWORD STROKES

## JUNE 2006 X-MEN TITLES

**ASTONISHING X-MEN 15:** The X-Men are given the business by the Hellfire Club. And it's not the business you want. It's bad business.

**UNCANNY X-MEN 474:** The entire universe hangs in the balance! And only Psylocke can save us! Can she do it? Either way, she'll LOOK good.

**ETERNALS 1:** Neil Gaiman and John Romita Jr. team up to bring you one of the most eagerly-awaited series of the year. It's got a painted cover, so you know it's classy!

**CABLE/DEADPOOL 29:** Domino has to shoot Cable, Deadpool has to fight Citizen V, and you have to read this issue!

**NEW EXCALIBUR 8:** Hey everyone, Psylocke's here! Can she stop Evil Professor X? (Man, she's busy this month!)

**WOLVERINE: ORIGINS 3:** Nuke and Wolverine decide to solve their differences with violence. Men!

**X-MEN THE END: BOOK THREE 6:** The end of The End is here! Every question you've ever had about anything is answered here!

**STORM 5:** Storm and Black Panther continue to fall in love. Come on T'Challa, seal the deal already!

**NEW X-MEN 27:** Stryker attacks the mansion! Kids are put in danger! You love it!

**EXILES 82 & 83:** The conclusion of World Tour! What will become of Morph?!

**UNCANNY X-MEN ANNUAL 1:** Is Storm going to marry Black Panther? Heck, if she doesn't, I will! He's a king! And I've got student loans to pay off!

**WOLVERINE 43:** Wolverine is on the hunt for Nitro! I hope he doesn't get confused and end up killing that dude from American Gladiators!

**X-FACTOR 8:** Quicksilver?! What are you doing in this issue? It better not be "knowing stuff," because X-Factor already has that position covered!

**NEXTWAVE: Agents of H.A.T.E. 6:** Dirk Anger just punched your favorite dolphin. Buy Nextwave and show him you mean business.

**X-MEN 187:** Apocalypse is gone, but his presence is still being felt. Gambit's still Death, and Sunfire siphoned your gas.

Dear *Sword Strokes*,

NEW EXCALIBUR has been great! I'm enjoying the characters and the plots. The Dark X-Men are interesting enemies. How come the X-Men (real X-Men, like Cyclops, Archangel, Beast, and Iceman) haven't noticed them with Cerebra or faced them yet? Keep up the good stories! You guys are great!

Kenny Norman  
Indianapolis, IN

Thanks Kenny. Glad you're liking the series so far. As for why the real X-Men haven't fought the dark ones? Well, they did. If you remember, in the first three issues, Nightcrawler, Marvel Girl, Kitty, and Psylocke were all there to help bring down the Dark X-Men.

Dear *Sword Strokes*,

NEW EXCALIBUR had a really bad start. Unattractive art, unattractive designs, and even Claremont's work wasn't up to par. The book was changing its direction every arc, due to various factors.

But having read issues #6-7, I think the tide is finally starting to pick up!

I enjoyed seeing Sage resist Shadow Xavier, although I got worried for a minute there because NEW EXCALIBUR had been a continuous disappointment for me until now, so I expected things to get messed up for Sage. But when Xavier thought he could regress Sage to childhood and break her to his will, I knew she would not succumb. Hokey for willpower and training! Good stuff!

I must say, though, Sage's costume and hair are still really bad. Please give Sage her Salvador Larroca hairstyle again, and a sleeker costume. The current one is so busy and blah. I have no idea why you guys insist on keeping these re-designs; no one likes them!

Also, special thanks to Chris Yost for helping Chris Claremont out! Yost did a seamless job with the dialogue in #7; it truly felt like Claremont.

Nadav

Sorry to be letting you down so early in the run, Nadav, but it looks like we're slowly winning you over. If only we could reach some agreement on Sage's hair and costume. We tell you what, what if we gave Sage Salvador Larroca's actual haircut? He's a good-looking man, and Sage would look quite fetching with his do. So what do you say? We got a deal?!

Also, a special thanks to Chris Yost is definitely in order! Chris also helped us out on this issue. If you enjoyed what

Chris did in this issue, be sure to check out NEW X-MEN, which Chris writes with Craig Kyle. Good stuff!

Dear *Sword Strokes*,

So I have just finished reading issue #6 and I have to wonder what the heck y'all are doing with Allison? She is one of the primary reasons I was excited about this book. She is one of my favorite mutants. Now the doctor at the Royal Victoria Hospital raises some intriguing questions. Immortal? It certainly is an interesting idea. Then, of course, on the last page Black Tom Cassidy, of all people, seemingly kills her once again. What is up with that? I mean, that's two times in six issues that it seems like she dies. Oy Vey! Regardless, I'm still so darn hooked if nothing more than to see what Chris has in store for her.

Steven Leitman  
Cincinnati, OH

Hey, Steven. Sorry to be putting you on the Dazzler roller coaster ride! But don't worry, the reasons for Dazzler's resurrection will all be revealed in due time.

That's all the room for this letters page, folks. We'll see you next time. And for all of you wondering what's to become of Psylocke, keep your ears open. Rumor has it she may be joining up with a certain reality-jumping team! Be on the lookout for information on that in the coming month! As for NEW EXCALIBUR, next month we welcome guest writer Frank Tieri! He'll be helping out while Chris Claremont is resting up for his return. See you next month!



# CHAMBER!

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